

Brief Report to KSU Faculty Senate
Ombudsperson Activities
June 1, 2002—May 31, 2003

Submitted by

A. Elizabeth (Betsy) Cauble

June 10, 2003



The Confidential nature of the ombudsperson requires that only summaries be used in this brief report. There is no specific information about any individual or their status. All conversations, actions, and outcomes are privileged information and appear only as aggregate data.

I began my first year as ombudsperson on June 1, 2002. At that time Aruna Michie transferred two cases to me. I met with Provost Coffman and Dr. Michie to discuss the role of the ombudsperson and learn what orientation opportunities were available. We also had a meeting of the Dispute Resolution Team to discuss everyone's role.

The following table represents ombudsperson activity for the time period of June 1, 2002 to May 31, 2003. An attempt was made to indicate the number and amount of time contacts for each case required. Although an effort was made to accurately record time spent, the time figures are estimates and are probably low. They do not reflect time spent to arrange meetings, travel to meetings, or record activities at meetings. Instances when the client was present at meetings involving collaterals are represented in the client's "In Person" category. The number of contacts is in parentheses following the amount of time spent.

Table 1. Caseload Activity by Contact by Time

Case	Nature of Contact					Total	Grievance Time	Resolution	
	Telephone	E-Mail	In Person	Collateral	Telephone/ E-Mail			In Person	Pending
1	2.5 (5)	.16 (1)	4.5 (2)	.16 (1)	2.5 (2)	9.82	?	X	
2	.25 (1)	.25 (1)	.5 (1)			1.0		X	
3	.75 (1)	1.5 (11)	3.0 (3)	.75 (4)	3.25 (4)	9.25		X	
4			.5 (1)			.5		X	
5	.16 (1)	.16 (1)	.75 (1)			1.07		X	
6	1.0 (2)	3.75 (19)	5.5 (3)	4.0 (8)	3.5 (3)	17.75		X	
7	.5 (1)	.16 (1)		.25 (1)	.75 (1)	1.66		X	
8	.25 (1)		6.0 (3)	.50 (5)	--- (2)	6.75		X	
9	1.0 (2)		1.0 (1)	.75 (2)	--- (1)	2.75		X	
10	.75 (2)	.16 (1)	2.0 (2)		1.0 (1)	3.91		X	
11			1.5 (1)			1.5		X	
12	.5 (2)		2.5 (3)		1.5 (1)	4.5		X	
13	.16 (1)		2.5 (2)	.5 (2)	--- (1)	3.16		X	
14				1.5 (1)		1.5		X	
15			1.0 (1)			1.0		X	
16	1.0 (4)	2.5 (13)	5.5 (3)	2.0 (8)	6.5 (6)	17.5		X	
17	6.25 (5)	3.5 (14)	4.0 (2)	.75 (2)	.5 (1)	15.0		X	
18	.75 (2)		1.0 (1)	.25 (1)		2.0		X	
19	.75 (2)					.75		X	
20	1.0 (2)		1.0 (1)	.5 (1)		2.5		X	
21	3.5 (7)	.75 (2)	8.0 (5)	2.5 (9)	8.75 (7)	23.5		X	
22			1.5 (1)			1.5		X	
Total	21.07 (41)	12.89 (64)	52.25 (37)	14.41 (45)	28.25 (30)	128.87 (30)	?	5	17

() designates number of contact

Activity was quite heavy this year. A total of 22 cases were served in 129.87 hours (16.23 regular work days) with 217 contacts. That is an average of 36 minutes per contact. Of those cases 17 were resolved, 5 are pending, and one may have a potential grievance. At this time I am not sure what the client decided to do. If the client does decide to file it would be to make a principled point.

The following figure compares the percentages of time spent on each case.

Figure 1. Average Amount of Time Spent on Cases. Percentages may vary because of issues involved in each case.

The figure clearly shows that four cases took the bulk of the time. Together they constitute 58% of the time spent on ombudsman cases. Each required multiple meetings and contacts with both the client and collaterals. Two remain pending and require periodic activity. The periodic activity has prevented the situations from escalating to a grievance or law suit filing.

The cases were nearly evenly distributed between male and female. The difference between males and female was three, but that difference was reduced by the two cases that involved more than one individual. In one case an entire department contacted me.

- Cases by Gender of Clients
- 8 male
- 11 female
- 2 > 1 person

The nature of complaints was very broad. Several clients were concerned about an issue that encompassed multiple categories. For example, someone might complain about his annual evaluation and also be concerned about the climate in the work environment. In those instances an attempt was made to address all issues.

•Cases by Nature of Complaint	
•Annual performance evaluation	1
•Discrimination / disability/ sexual harassment	6
•Disputes with Management	4
•Salary dispute	2
•Scholarship Activities	2
•Tenure and Promotion	8
•Workload	1
•Workplace climate	9
•Other	1
Total	34

Complaints came from across the campus with most coming from the College of Arts and Sciences. For purposes of confidentiality specific departments within colleges are not identified. Each college had at least one complaint involving workplace climate.

•Complaints by College	
•Agriculture	2
•Architecture, Planning & Design	2
•Arts & Sciences	9
•Business	2
•Engineering	1
•Human Ecology	4
•KSU–Salina	1
•Veterinary Medicine	1

This has been an interesting, gratifying, and frustrating year for me. Coming to a resolution in situations that appear hopeless is truly wonderful. Being unable to reach a resolution acceptable to all parties is sometimes infuriating. Perhaps most hopeful to successful resolution of personnel disputes at K-State is the willingness of every administrator I contacted to talk with me and work toward a mutually beneficial solution to whatever problem existed. However, the fear and distrust that some faculty and staff harbor for administration often prevents them from resolving small difficulties before they become big ones. It is important that all parties recognize that everyone has a different perception of the problem or situation. In short, administrators don't really know what it is like to be faculty and staff, and faculty and staff don't really know what it is like to be administrators. Successful resolution requires that all parties are willing to hear the perspectives of the other.

For next year Jane Rowlett and I will be working on a Dispute Resolution Web site that will provide faculty and staff with information necessary to find the assistance they need to deal with difficult problems. The web site will also have a section for ombudspersons to find information and tips to assist with their work.

Finally I would like to acknowledge that without the assistance of many, I could not have done my job. Thank you to Provost Coffman whose willingness to be available and think flexibly has resulted in several creative solutions to difficult problems. Al Cochran, Jane Rowlett, and Ruth Dyer were always willing to discuss issues and answer questions. Aruna Michie got me off to a good start. Cheryl Strecker in the attorney's office provided much needed legal counsel. For some reason she got stuck with me more than the other attorneys did. My fellow ombudspersons, John Raupp and Farrell Webb, provided support and information throughout the year. Having these folks as part of the team made successful dispute resolution possible.